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A POEM,



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THE AUTHOR.

THE BATTLE OF THE TYNE.*

"I row because I love to row; I win because I can."—HANLAN.

Along the Tyne, along the Tyne, in swaying crowds they stand,
The sturdy men of England, and men from every land,
And some look from the city's walls, some from the castle high,
Upon the pleasant waters of the old Tyne sweeping by,
While upon the river's bosom a score of good ships ride,
Each thronged with men of England, and every land beside;
And 'mongst these giants of the deep, like arrows from the bow,
A countless fleet of little boats are darting to and fro.

But what is all this tumult for—this gathering of men
From out the teeming cities, and from every hill and glen?
No foe is coming o'er the deep, as in the days of yore,
When Cæsar and his Roman hosts bore down upon the shore;
And the men of ancient Britain, the heroic men of old,
Struggled for their liberties with a bravery yet untold,
Nor warrior returning homeward, covered with renown,
With new-made vassals for his lord, new jewels for his crown.

Long, long hath England boasted of her proud supremacy—
Her victories, her noble deeds, performed by land and sea;
Her flag floats o'er more battlements, her empire's greater far
Than ever Roman Cæsar ruled, or ever Russian Czar;
And it is held in reverence upon the boundless waves,
For it hath struck the pirate down, and freed the captive slaves,
And we are proud that we belong to such a noble band,
And that Her Gracious Majesty rules o'er this wondrous land!

*It is due to myself to say that this poem was written very shortly after the last great achievement of the young man to whom it is respectfully dedicated. It is due also to myself to say that I do not in any way desire to interfere with the circulation of the Ode which has been published for the benefit of the Hanlan Homestead Fund. There is no one in Canada who takes more pride in the achievements of Edward Hanlan than myself; and those who, like myself (and I am sure there are many), appreciate merit, will not fail to buy the "Epitaphic Ode," and "The Battle of the Tyne" should they deem it worthy of perusal.

And long hath England boasted that within her sea-girt shore
 There lived and moved the greatest men that ever plied the oar,
 And many a bold adventurer came from the far off-west
 And strove the kingship of the sculls from her oarsmen to wrest.
 But vain were all their efforts; when from the antipodes—
 From sunny Australasia, amid the balmy seas—
 There came a stalwart oarsman who woo'd and won the prize,
 And bore it to his native land beneath the southern skies.

The scene is changed! In another land, a decade of years ago,
 A little boy is learning his little boat to row;
 But little think the people what a future is in store
 For the youthful mariner who roams the waters o'er;
 Only his fisherman sire hopes—against fate it may seem—
 That at no distant future, of scullers he'll rule supreme;
 But Heaven decreed that that good man should live not to behold
 The mighty exploits of his boy—his deeds in story told:

How on Schuylkill's placid waters, on Freedom's natal day,
 He vanquished men of known renown, and bore the palm away,
 And he who left his native land a boy unknown to fame
 Was welcomed back to Canada with pomp and glad acclaim—
 For 'twas the wonder of us all that such a youth as he
 Could row his boat with greater speed than men from o'er the sea
 Whose names we lisped long with awe, and whom our fancy wrought
 Into giants 'fore whom all other men faded into nought.

How one by one the oarsmen come to wrestle with his boy,
 And all their prowess and their skill to vanquish him employ.
 First Ross, from the Kennebecasis, one worthy to wield
 His sculls upon any waters, unto the Fates appealed;
 But the answer he received was the flashing of each oar
 Of our hero, the victor, full three lengths to the fore,
 And the cheers of many people who came from far and near,
 And bore witness to the struggle from every boat and pier.

How the New York sculler came, but in his wondrous speed,
 He did not prove to have the stay our champion brave to lead,
 How Morris, on the Houghton course, struggled with might and main
 To leave our hero in the wake, but struggled all in vain;
 And last of all the sculling knights, a sort of "forlorn hope,"
 Came Courtney, from the Union Springs, with our hero bold to cope,
 And o'er Lachine's historic course they tested skill and strength,
 When, lo! this giant oarsman was defeated by a length!

Thus one by one the oarsmen fell our hero's sculls before,
 Until within this continent of peers he had no more,
 And was crowned Champion of the West! But yet, unpent
 Within the narrow limits of a single continent;
 He longed for other conquests, he sighed for more renown!
 He coveted Old England's champion sculler's crown!
 And with his trusty followers he ploughed the stormy seas
 To achieve in Merry England more famous victories.

Honour to England! Though he comes with fame fit to inspire
 With fear; her sons, ever full of their traditional fire,
 Hasten to meet him, Hawdon first daring him to the fray,
 And girding on their arms they meet, when Hanlan leads the way!
 Then down to the Tyne there comes a pitman strong and brave!
 He alone can guard her honour—he alone can save
 The honour of Old England's sculls in the face of any foe
 That ever on Old Father Tyne presumed his boat to row.

Proud are the Northmen of their man, and justly they may be,
 For many a foe he has laid low, and a gallant man is he;
 And as he steps into his boat from off the crowded pier,
 From thrice ten thousand English throats goes up a ringing cheer.
 The "Bonnie Pit Lad" is their hope, and who more fit to stand
 Like "Nisus at the Portal," in defence of native land?—
 Yet, yet they fear within their hearts, for no less brave is he
 Who to-day will struggle with him for England's mastery.

But not so with the friends of him who, dressed in shirt of blue,
 Upholds in Old World waters the honour of the New.
 What though the cheers be feeble that greet him here and there,
 They know full well what he can do, and little do they care—
 They know full well that ere an hour is numbered with the past,
 Old England's champion will fall, and England stand aghast,
 And soon upon her battlements young Canada's ensign
 Will float in honour of her son's proud vict'ry on the Tyne.

Twelve-fourteen by the clock! Twelve-fourteen! The word is given!
 Quick flash their oars upon the Tyne, when, lo! the air is riven
 With the cheers of the men on land, cheers of the men on boats,
 With a wild hurrah that springs from thrice ten thousand throats,
 As each sculler bends to his oars, and with a giant force
 Drives his boat with terrific speed along the placid course,
 And the mighty young Canadian would seem to have at last
 Met a foe can test his strength—a foeman can hold him fast.

But ere two hundred yards have passed, and to their deep dismay,
 The Canadian boy drew to the fore, and held fast on his way;
 And though the Northman strove the, while with all the force he could,
 At Skinnerburn our hero had just two lengths to the good;
 At Redhugh Bridge his lead increased, and at Dunn-street gangway
 He led the Northman by three lengths, while o'er his features play
 A pleasant smile as he looks back upon his gallant foe,
 Whose face now wears the impress of astonishment and woe.

But ever onward on its course, at a terrific pace,
 The sturdy Northman drove his boat, thinking, mayhap, the space
 Between our hero and himself, to lessen, or 't might be,
 To outwind his great antagonist from o'er the trackless sea;
 But all in vain! Amid the cheers of the assembled throng
 Our hero only drove his boat with renewed speed along,
 And at the two-mile point he was some four lengths to the fore,
 And every stroke he made increased the distance more and more.

Six lengths to the fore at Scotswood ; but, lo ! there's not a cheer
 Six lengths behind was Elliott—we find the secret here !
 The Englishmen have gathered here to witness the defeat
 Of the colonial oarsman and their own comrade to greet !
 But, lo ! he comes not in the van, but lingers in the wake,
 Though he struggles the best he can for Old England's sake,
 And seems to hope that even yet, though 'tis at fearful odds,
 He may outrow the foreigner, and live yet with the gods.

And ever he struggles bravely ; with dogged will he swings
 His sculls, while his boat glides along as if borne upon wings !
 But in vain are all his efforts ; not all his skill and might
 Availeth him to reach our champion in his onward flight !
 And ever the gap increases, ever his glory fades !
 Ever a thrill of amazement each spectator pervades,
 As proudly dashing onward our hero won the day,
 And the kingship of her sculls has from England passed away !

All honour to the victor, then—aye, to the vanquished too !
 All honour to the champion of the Old World and the New ;
 Rob not the land that gave him birth—rob us not of the fame
 That clusters round a countryman's now immortal name !
 Say not that it was British pluck that bore him to the fore !
 Say not that it was Uncle Sam that schooled him to the oar !
 No ! no ! the victory is ours ! to us be all the glory !
 And Edward Hanlan find a place in our Dominion's story !

ODE TO THE QUEEN.

O Queen, illustrious, thy many subjects pay,
 With joyful hearts, their homage to thee to-day,
 And thank the Father—who doth all things well—
 Who thus addeth to thy years, that they may swell
 Thy praises, and upon land and on the sea,
 O'er all thy empire, proclaim thy majesty.

O Queen, illustrious, when thy loved daughter lay
 In death's embrace, all turned to thee that day,
 And hearts remote, even as hearts most fond and dear,
 Were moved to sorrow for thee and thine ; and here
 In this young empire, this world of wealth unknown,
 We felt, O Queen beloved, thy sorrows were our own.

O Queen, illustrious, while in the many lands
 Where proudly floats thy flag, and where by trusty hands
 It is borne to victory, they hail with glad acclaim
 This auspicious day ; we, ever praising thy name,
 Behold in the presence of thine beyond the sea
 Proof of thy abiding faith in our fidelity.

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